regarding the influence of the social environment on intelligence test scores.

H. J. EYSENCK.

HOMOSEXUALITY

Hyde, H. Montgomery (Editor). *The Trials of Oscar Wilde.* London, 1948. William Hodge. Pp. 384, 16 plates. Price 15s.

THE death of Lord Alfred Douglas has enabled the subject of Oscar Wilde's fall to be discussed in an atmosphere free from the fear of writs for libel. Little is likely to be added to the findings of Hesketh Pearson's biography as regards the facts of the matter. From about the year 1886 Wilde had become increasingly addicted to homosexual practices. In 1895 he was egged on by Lord Alfred Douglas to prosecute the latter's father. The ostensible motive for the prosecution was the defence of Wilde's reputation; but Douglas (pigheaded, ignorant, and spiteful) was far more concerned with hatred of his father than solicitude for his friend. Once the writ was issued the rest followed with all the inevitableness of a Greek tragedy. Either *hubris* or a masochistic desire for martyrdom led Wilde to ruin himself.

The addition of the Wilde trials to the "Notable British Trials" series will supersede *Oscar Wilde: Three Times Tried*, which Cecil Palmer published in collaboration with Stuart Mason, the bibliographer of Wilde's works, in 1912. The present reports are complete except for some heavy censoring of the evidence given by Wilde's accomplices. For what is omitted the curious reader will still have to rely on a scabrous publication issued by Carrington in Paris in the first decade of this century. These lacunæ are to some extent compensated for, however, by Appendix E, in which the exact nature of Wilde's activities is made clear.

The introduction and notes to the present volume are as valuable as the report itself. The editor gives exact references to all the basic authorities on his subject, and one can only regret the absence of a formal bibliography. An appendix on "The Prevalence of Male Homosexuality in England" accepts perhaps a little too uncritically the views of foreigners such as Bloch, Raffalovich, and Hirschfeld. Public opinion on homosexuality has become increasingly humane since Wilde's day; nevertheless an eminent member of the Bar in reviewing this volume expresses the hope that the only lesson that will be drawn from it will be the necessity of eradicating such "pests" from society. Yet the savage punishment inflicted on Wilde entirely defeated its object not only as regards the victim himself but also as regards society at large. It has made him an object of sympathy in the eyes of the civilized world, enhanced the importance of his literary works far beyond their intrinsic deserts, and drawn the attention of generations of students of English literature to the subject of homosexuality at an unnecessarily early age.

Sympathy with the victims of a barbarous legal persecution should not blind us to the fact that homosexuality presents society with a problem with which it has to deal. Homosexuals are foremost among those scavengers of love who hover round unhappy marriages and exasperate the difficulties of normal relationships, while their literary advocacy presents a view of life incompatible with biologically fertile social organization. One thing seems fairly certain: the hard core of genuine homosexuals is vastly increased by normal and borderline cases who are driven into the homosexual camp by the restrictions which modern society places on the satisfaction of heterosexual impulses.

The book under review has been banned in Eire under the Censorship of Publications Acts.

ALEC CRAIG.

NEGLECTED CHILDREN

Women's Group on Public Welfare. *The Neglected Child and His Family.* London, 1948. Cumberlege. Pp. 140. Price 5s.

THE Curtis Committee deliberately abstained from examining the problem of children who

suffer from neglect and other evils while still in their own homes under their parents' care. Recognizing the great importance of this matter, however, the committee expressed the hope that serious consideration would be given to the home conditions of neglected children and they implied that by improving these conditions the number of children who would have to leave their homes might be lessened. It is to this matter that the committee set up by the Women's Group on Public Welfare (in association with the National Council of Social Service) addressed itself. The report now published indicates how well fitted its members were for the task entrusted to them and how practical and well informed was their approach to this large social issue.

The dimensions of the problem are not easy to determine. A minimum and sigficant statistic is provided by the N.S.P.C.C., who in the year 1944-5 alone dealt with 107,312 children coming from 41,050 different families; "there is every reason to suppose that beyond these publicized cases there lies an unexplored region of unalleviated child suffering." The committee did what it could to explore this dark region. Besides taking evidence from a number of expert witnesses, it collected data by means of a questionnaire from doctors, social workers, teachers, magistrates and health visitors. Three detailed investigations were made—one into the background of a sample of 2,000 cases admitted into Dr. Barnado's Homes, one into the frequency of child neglect among a sample of 2,000 widows receiving supplementary pensions from the Assistance Board, and one into the social circumstances, capacity and health of a small number of women committed to prison for child neglect.

The outcome of these inquiries is contained in fifty pages of painstaking analysis which show that neglect can arise from a number of interacting factors, each aggravating the other. No one factor could be exclusively indicted. Poverty, ignorance, bad housing, mental abnormality or subnormality, more children than the mother could manage, "a broken home," lack of harmony between the parents, ill health—all played a part. It was by no means true that deliberate cruelty was a frequent cause of neglect: where cruelty occurred it was due to abnormal mental states, with which alcoholism might be associated.

A most valuable chapter concerns the "Law and Its Administration," and the recommendations arising out of this. The removal of a child from its home is most often effected by a court decision. The report wisely points out, however, that although the child's removal provides a ready answer to the problem of the unsatisfactory home, this can hardly be regarded as psychologically an ideal solution; the tie between a child and its parent, and the security afforded by the home and the family are of great emotional importance. On the other hand this does not justify the conclusion that the child's own home is always the best place for him, as some enthusiasts maintain; "respect for the family is so great . . . that action is frequently not taken to remove a child from a situation which is obviously damaging to his whole personality."

The constructive final section of the report examines the social experiments, many of them remarkably successful, which have aimed at improving the situation of the problem family, by a variety of methods: intensive case work, e.g. the Pacifist Service Units; the home advisory service; residential treatment, as at Brentwood; the recuperation centre for mothers and children set up near Manchester by the Community Council for Lancashire; and the complementary schemes in Holland. The committee came to the conclusion that the most effective social measures are intensive case work with families, providing at the outset material and practical assistance, and residential treatment of the Brentwood type, although there would remain an obdurate proportion of families who would not respond to them. Compulsory segregation or other enforced steps would not, however, in the committee's judgment, be justified, because of the effect they would have on the dignity and self-respect of the people concerned.

The committee also suggests some changes in the social services which would alleviate or prevent child neglect, at any rate on the scale which now prevails. What is probably the most efficacious single proposal in the report is to be found in the recommendation that local authorities should be made responsible for providing a comprehensive service of care for all children living in their area and that the Children's Committee carrying out this responsibility should appoint a qualified social worker as its executive officer for this purpose.

The report of the committee was drawn up before the provisions of the Children Act, 1948, were known, but in its insistence on the desirability of imposing upon the local authority a comprehensive duty in respect of children's welfare, the committee lays its finger on what is a regrettable deficiency in the Act. It rightly holds that the children's care service should be concerned with the interests of all children and should be able to come into play before some disaster obviously impends or has already occurred. Preventive action could often enable the child to remain in its own home without suffering further neglect or harm thereby.

The combination of sober and practicable recommendations with an objective assessment of the problem make this report a notable contribution to the documents which point the way towards safeguarding the interests of children. H. L.

PSYCHOLOGY

Glover, E. *Basic Mental Concepts: Their Clinical and Theoretical Value.* London, 1947. Imago Publishing Co. Pp. 32. Price 3s. 6d.

" EVER since Freud's death in 1939," writes Dr. Glover, " it has become more and more evident that resistances to psycho-analysis have grown in strength." Dr. Glover accepts as inevitable the " resistances " which psycho-analysts see in the failure of non-analysts to accept their doctrine. He is here concerned with " resistances " apparent within the movement itself. To the most benign, sympathetic and interested observers of psycho-analysis, the spectacle of heresy hunts, of the accusation of psychological " resistance " used as a weapon between protagonists of this or that sub-theory against their opponents, has always proved painful. Dr. Glover's paper is written as a critique of the principles of theorizing which he finds in the Klein system of child psychology. This is concerned with early mental development, particularly between the ages of three and six months, and the question of whether it is appropriate to postulate such concepts as differentiated ego systems, super-ego systems, mental mechanisms and situations such as the Œdipus situation, which Freud himself described as typical of the fourth or fifth year. All this is highly techcal, and no one not involved in such controversies and unfamiliar with the particular meanings given to many of the concepts is in a position to offer criticism. An authoritative, comprehensive restatement of Freud's discoveries would be very welcome at the present time, but unfortunately Dr. Glover, setting out to give us this, leaves the impression that he has added a substantial admixture of his own. Indeed, it is becoming doubtful if any two distinguished exponents of psycho-analysis can be found to agree as to what is and what is not a " basic mental concept."

The present unhappy situation was foreseen very clearly by Bernard Hart in his well-known Goulstonian Lectures of 1926. The originator of psycho-analysis adhered to an experimental system which, while criticised by many as having certain inherent weaknesses, resulted in wide recognition of his discoveries as scientifically valid, contributing more to our understanding of the human mind than any other system. From a large number of clinically observed facts, concepts about mental structure, motivation and mechanism were postulated. The later work of the Freudian School " with its minute dissection of the libido and ego into constituent parts, which combine and interact in various ways," introduced (Dr. Hart pointed out in 1926) " a number of conceptual entities, which approximate in their